

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 639

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, EEC, ETRD, GR

SUBJECT: EC MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES ON TOMATO CONCENTRATES FROM GREECE

REF: (A) 75 TOFAS 245, (B) 75 EC A-320, (C) 75 EC A-334, (D)

75 EC BRUSSELS 07309

1. EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, THE EC WILL APPLY MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES TO TOMATO CONCENTRATES FROM GREECE. EC ISSUANCES OF IMPORT LICENSES FOR TOMATO CONCENTRATES ORIGINATING FROM GREECE WILL BE CONDITIONAL ON A SURETY DEPOSIT TO GUARANTEE THAT THE EC MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES ARE RESPECTED. THIS ACTION IS BEING TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 41 OF THE ATHENS AGREEMENT.

2. HERETOFORE, NO MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES APPLIED TO GREEK IMPORTS OF TOMATO CONCENTRATES AS OPPOSED TO IMPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES, WHICH WERE SUBJECT TO MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES. GREEK CONCENTRATES WERE, HOWEVER, SUBJECT TO THE LICENSING REQUIREMENT, WITH SURETY DEPOSIT TO GUARANTEE THAT IMPORTS REGISTERED ON THE LICENSE WOULD BE EFFECTED (REF TOFAS). THIS LICENSE REQUIREMENT WITH SURETY

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CONTINUES TO APPLY TO GREEK IMPORTS; HOWEVER, THE

ADDITIONAL SURETY, PER PARA 1, MUST BE PAID AS WELL.

3. LICENSES FOR GREEK CONCENTRATES WHICH HAVE BEEN ISSUED BEFORE MARCH 1 CANNOT BE USED AFTER THAT DATE. UPON REQUEST BY ANY PERSON CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THE NOW INVALID LICENSES CAN BE REPLACED WITH NEW LICENSES PROVIDED THE ADDITIONAL SURETY IS PAID. THE NEW LICENSES WILL HAVE THE SAME DATE OF EXPIRY AS THE ONES THEY REPLACE. ACCORDING TO TRADE SOURCES, THIS ACTION AFFECTS A CARGO OF GREEK TOMATO CONCENTRATES CURRENTLY ON THE WATER AND DESTINED FOR THE EC MARKET.

4. THE EC HAS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT LOW -PRICED OFFERINGS OF GREEK TOMATO CONCENTRATES FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW. THE GREEKS HAVE NOT BEEN RESPECTING THE MINIMUM EXPORT PRICES PREVIOUSLY WORKED OUT WITH THE EC COMMISSION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ITALIANS HAVE BEEN PUSHING VERY HARD FOR MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES AGAINST GREECE. AS FAR BACK AS NOVEMBER, THE COMMISSION'S TECHNICAL SERVICES HAD RECOMMENDED APPLYING MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES TO GREEK CONCENTRATES, A DRAFT PROPOSAL THAT WAS REJECTED BY COMMISSIONER LARDINOIS FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

5. MISSION WILL FORWARD BY AIRGRAM THE FULL TEXT OF COMMISSION REGULATION NO. 459/76 IMPLEMENTING EC MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES ON GREEK TOMATO CONCENTRATES.

6. COMMENT: THIS ACTION APPEARS TO CONTRADICT THE COMMISSION'S OFTEN-HEARD ARGUMENT THAT THE LICENSING ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE NEW COMMON REGIME FOR PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES REPRESENT IMPROVED TREATMENT OF FOREIGN SUPPLIERS SINCE A LICENSE ONCE ISSUED IS A GUARANTEE TO ACCESS INTO THE EC MARKET. ALTHOUGH COMMISSION OFFICIALS INSIST THAT THE MOVE TO APPLY MINIMUM IMPORT PRICES TO GREEK IMPORTS WAS TAKEN UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, ITS RELEVANCE TO THIRD COUNTRY SUPPLIERS CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED AS A PRECEDENT FOR CHANGING CONDITIONS OF ENTRY AFTER EC LICENSES ARE ISSUED. HINTON
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Message Attributes

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